

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 0366

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IS, RO, PFOR, XF
SUBJ: AVINERI VISIT TO ROMANIA
REF: TEL AVIV 0120

1. SUMMARY. PRINCIPAL RESULTS OF AVINERI VISIT
ACCORDING TO ISRAELI SOURCES WERE TO GIVE ROMANIANS
CLEAR-CUT ISRAELI VIEW OF PRESENT ME SITUATION AND
TO ATTEMPT TO BALANCE WHAT GOI SEES AS OVERLY PRO-
PLO POSITION BY GOR. BILATERAL RELATIONS RECEIVED
ONLY SECONDARY ATTENTION. FIGURE FOR 1977 ROMANIAN
JEWISH EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL IS EXPECTED TO REMAIN
AROUND 2,000 WHICH AVINERI DESCRIBED AS ACCEPTABLE
ALTHOUGH NOT SATISFACTORY. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING JANUARY 11 CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR
BARNES, AVINERI CLAIMED THAT MAIN VALUE OF HIS VISIT
WAS TO CONVEY DIRECTLY TO ROMANIAN OFFICIALS
"NUANCES" OF ISRAELI POSITION ON ME, TO ATTEMPT
TO BALANCE NUMERICALLY SUPERIOR ARAB CHANNELS
OF CONTACT WITH GOR, AND TO EXERT SOME INFLUENCE
ON FUTURE ROMANIAN POLICY FORMULATION TOWARD ME.
HE DESCRIBED ROMANIAN POSITION AS HAVING ADOPTED
OVERLY APOCALYPTIC ARAB VIEW THAT PROGRESS WOULD
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HAVE TO BE MADE BY MARCH OR DIRE CONSEQUENCES
WOULD RESULT. AVINERI BELIEVES ROMANIANS NOW
UNDERSTAND THAT SUBSTANCE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN
A RIGID TIMETABLE. MORE SPECIFICALLY, HE ARGUED
THAT PLO POSITION IS EVOLVING TOWARD SOME SORT OF
ARRANGEMENT WITH JORDAN AND THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF
A PALESTINIAN WEST BANK STATE WOULD BE A PERMANENT

SOURCE OF INSTABILITY FOR ENTIRE AREA. FINALLY, HE ARGUED THAT IT IS NOT IN ROMANIA'S INTEREST TO CONTINUE TO ESPOUSE MOST RIGID PLO POSITION AT TIME WHEN MODERATE ELEMENTS IN PLO ARE MOVING TO MODIFY THIS STANCE.

3. AVINERI WAS IMPRESSED BY GENERAL KNOWLEDGEABILITY AND SERIOUS INTEREST IN ME OF SENIOR ROMANIAN OFFICIALS AND BY THEIR WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN AND TAKE ACCOUNT OF ISRAELI ARGUMENTS, AS WELL AS INSISTENCE ON ARAB RECOGNITION OF ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE. ONE "INTERESTING" ROMANIAN SUGGESTION TO GET GENEVA CONFERENCE MOVING WAS TO ORGANIZE IT IN STAGES, WITH NON-PALESTINIAN ITEMS DISCUSSED FIRST AND PALESTINIAN QUESTIONS AND ISSUE OF PLO REPRESENTATION HELD UNTIL LATER. AVINERI ALSO SAID ROMANIANS URGED THAT RABIN'S VISIT TO BUCHAREST, AGREED TO IN PRINCIPLE DURING LAST UNGA SESSION, TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS INTERNAL ISRAELI CONDITIONS PERMIT.

4. AVINERI SAID HE RAISED JEWISH EMIGRATION QUESTION ONLY IN GENERAL TERMS AND HAD BEEN PROMISED IT WOULD CONTINUE "AT THE SAME RATE" (I.E. AROUND 2,000 PER YEAR). HE SAID REALISTICALLY THIS IS ACCEPTABLE BUT NOT SATISFACTORY; NEVERTHELESS, UNREMITTED PRESSURE NEEDS TO BE CONTINUED ON GOR (PRINCIPALLY BY U.S.) OR PRESENT STATUS QUO WILL NOT EVEN BE MAINTAINED.
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5. IN FOLLOWUP CONVERSATION JANUARY 14, ISRAELI AMBASSADOR CAHANA GENERALLY CONFIRMED ABOVE POINTS TO EMBOFFS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY VEHEMENT ABOUT ISRAEL'S "BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT" WITH WHAT GOI VIEWS AS PRONOUNCED ROMANIAN TILT TOWARD PLO IN RECENT MONTHS, AND HE CITED AS EXAMPLES ROMANIAN ACTIVITIES IN UN, IN MANUEVERINGS PREPARATORY TO A GENEVA CONFERENCE, AND IN LOBBYING PROMINENT AMERICAN JEWS TO URGE ISRAELI "MODERATION". SUCH ACTIVITIES, HE CLAIMED, RAISE DOUBTS WHETHER ROMANIA IS SERVING AS SOVIET STALKING HORSE ON ME AFFAIRS, EITHER THROUGH CONVICTION OR CONVENIENCE, AND CALL INTO QUESTION GOR'S VAUNTED "INDEPENDENT" FOREIGN POLICY. CAHANA DUCKED DIRECT RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON FORTH-COMING EMIGRATION NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOR BUT IMPLIED SUCH TALKS WOULD BE HELD SOON.

6. CAHANA AGREED THAT BILATERAL MATTERS HAD TAKEN SECOND PLACE, AND HE SAW NO IMPORTANT NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN EITHER CULTURAL OR ECONOMIC FIELDS. DISCUSSIONS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ISRAELI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS HERE REMAINED INCONCLUSIVE.

7. COMMENT: BOTH ISRAELI OFFICIALS SEEMED PLEASED WITH VISIT, UNDERLINING ONCE AGAIN ISRAELI INTEREST IN MAINTAINING DIALOGUE WITH GOR, ALBEIT OFTEN WITH LESS THAN IDEAL RESULTS. BUCHAREST REMAINS A CONVENIENT LOCALE TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND TO PRESENT VIEWS FOR TRANSMISSION TO OTHER ME ACTORS. IN THIS REGARD CAHANA TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE THAT FOREIGN MINISTER MACOVESCU WILL UNDERTAKE VISIT TO TEL AVIV WITHIN NEXT SIX MONTHS. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE STRONG CONFIDENTIAL

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IMPRESSION THAT ISRAELI ASSESSMENT IS THAT ROMANIA WILL NOT BE A PRINCIPAL ACTOR IN EVENTUAL ME NEGOTIATIONS IN SPITE OF OBVIOUS ROMANIAN EAGERNESS FOR SUCH A ROLE. VIETS

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